

U.S. and Britain Reject East-West Divide in Ukraine

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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WASHINGTON — The U.S. and Britain on Tuesday rejected suggestions that the ouster of Ukraine's pro-Russia president and the politics around it are representative of a Cold War-era East-West divide.

Secretary of State John Kerry and British Foreign Secretary William Hague both disputed the idea that the situation in Ukraine is a "zero-sum game" between Russia and the West, or one in which one sphere of influence wins at the expense of the other. And, each urged Russia to work with the West in helping the Ukrainian people peacefully achieve their democratic aspirations.

"Both of us are committed to doing our part to support the efforts of people in Ukraine who have spoken out on their own with passion for their ability to have a pluralistic, democratic future," Kerry said.

"This is not a zero-sum game it is not a West versus East, it should not be, it is not Russia or the U.S. or other choices. This is about the people of Ukraine making a choice about their future. We want to work with Russia, with other countries, with everybody available to make sure this is peaceful from this day forward," he said.

Hague echoed those comments.

"This is about the rights of a free people, a free democratic people to make their own decisions and we do not see it in a zero-sum way in international affairs," Hague said. "Our national interests are in the people of Ukraine being able to make their own decisions about their future."

Kerry and Hague, speaking at the start of a State Department conference on sexual violence in conflict, also said their countries oppose any attempt to partition or divide the former Soviet republic into pro-Western and pro-Russian territories.

"The independence and territorial integrity of the Ukraine is extremely important," Hague said. He added that it is "urgent" for Western nations and international lenders to prepare financial packages to help support Ukraine's transition but equally urgent that the country's interim leaders "prepare themselves to meet the necessary conditions for that financial support." He did not elaborate on those conditions.

A spokeswoman for Kerry, Jen Psaki, said maintaining a "unified and whole Ukraine" should be of critical importance for all concerned.

"We do not feel that secession or partition is in the interests of anyone, whether the Ukrainian people or the U.S., Europe or Russia," she said. "We feel strongly that Ukraine should remain united."

Some Russian officials have denounced the ouster of President Viktor Yanukovich as a Western-backed plot and earlier Tuesday dozens of pro-Russian protesters rallied in the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea against "the bandits" in Kiev who are trying to form a new government — with some even speaking of secession. A lawmaker from Russia stoked their passions further by promising them that Russia will protect them.

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